611 centralized the political system the greater the tendency seems
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182 to be for the corporate strength of descent groups to be reduced or for such corporate groups to be non-existent."[1] This is particularly apt in describing the Kanuri. Fortes states that the Nupe, the Zulu and the Hausa exemplify this. Culturally, the Kanuri share a good deal with both the Nupe and the Hausa, who are also Sudanic state-societies influenced by Islam, and this similarity extends to their social organization as well. In fact, the Kanuri represent the most extreme development of these features, for whereas among both the Nupe and the Hausa patrilineal lineages and sibs are reported the Kanuri are clearly bilateral in descent, and do not have corporate kin groups at all.

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595 The most important social unit determined by kinship is
oo the nuclear or the polygamous family. Consequently, this section will be concerned with a discussion of marriage, residence, the family and the household. Other aspects of social organization which are not based on kinship, such as the class structure, will be discussed separately.

1. Marriage.

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587 It may seem curious to begin a section on marriage with a statement about divorce; nevertheless it is important to note at the start that the Kanuri divorce frequently, commonly, and

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1. Meyer Fortes. "The Structure of Unilineal Descent Groups," American Anthropologist, 55, No. 1 (1953), p. 26.

592 [602] Relationships within the household are patterned after kinship relations, and kinship terminology is used in referring to these relations, but kinship is not the basis for establishing these relationships in the first place. The household is a corporate group, in that its membership is clearly defined, it operates with common interests of the group in mind, and the household group is itself structured and dependent upon the fulfillment of mutual obligations. In this sense, the household group among the Kanuri is functionally very similar to the corporate kin group in a society with unilineal descent.

The household is made up of all those individuals living within compound walls; the physical definition of the compound [594] corresponds to the social unit of the household. A household may be as small as two people--husband and wife, and in a statistical sense the commonest type of household is made up of 592 the nuclear family. It was noted that in the small villages 369 wealth differences between various members of a village were 565 slight, and consequently polygamy tends to be rare. It follows, too, that under those circumstances the household is [595] small, usually no larger than the nuclear family. In the larger towns, households may be very large, since households vary directly in size with the wealth and social class of the household head. Many of the factors which enter into the growth of a man's household concern the system of social stratification among the Kanuri. Some indication of the nature of social